



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp 1-1 Cav. Public Affairs)

Christmas came early this year

Marietta, Ga. native Staff Sgt. William Stone, a squad leader from Company E, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, offers a toy to a little Iraqi girl while her grandmother observes the interaction March 26 near the village of Khan Dari, Iraq. (See story page 2)

Joint police force works toward a more secure Iraq

By Sgt. Marcus Butler
4-25 Inf. Public Affairs

ISKANDARIYAH, Iraq - The future security of Iraq starts at the ground level with the Iraqi security forces. In order to prepare the Iraqi's for this responsibly, Soldiers in transition teams have been working around the clock all over Iraq.

Soldiers of the 127th Military Police Company are ready for this challenge.

Based out of Forward Operating

Base Kalsu, the headquarters for the 127th MP have platoons throughout the battle space for the 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division.

One platoon in particular, 3rd Platoon "Wolf Pack" is operating in Iskandariyah, Iraq home to the 1st Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th BCT (Airborne), 25th Inf. Div. The Wolf Pack arrived at FOB Iskan approximately four months ago fully knowing their mission.

"Our mission as a police transition

team is to make sure the (Iraqi police) are fully trained and qualified to take on the mission of securing their country and keeping the citizens safe," said Staff Sgt. Johnny Colon, squad leader and Guayama, Puerto Rico native.

This mission is of the highest priority to not only to the IPs that are training but also for the civilians they are training to protect.

"In our area of operation, the impor-

see Secure Page 4

Lancer troops work to make streets safe for Iraqis

By Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp
1-1 Cav. Public Affairs

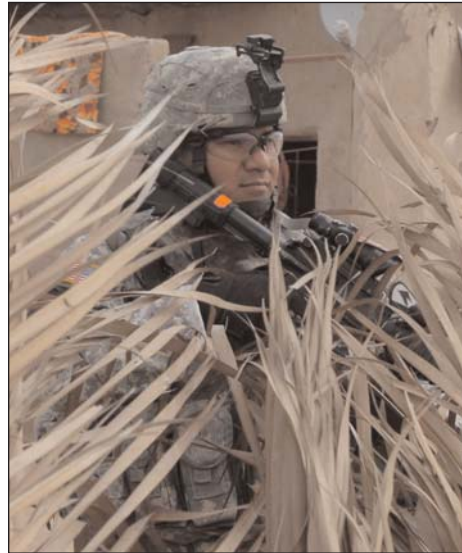
KHAN DARI, Iraq - Making the streets safer for Iraqi civilians in their area of operations has been one of the main goals for troopers from the 2nd "Lancer" Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment.

After three improvised explosive devices (IEDs) detonated, including one that injured two children near a school here March 25, Company E, 2nd Bn., 5th Cav. Regt. Soldiers were out gathering information March 26 to help catch those responsible and to continue building relationships with the people living in the village.

The children who are in good condition were sent to a local area hospital where they are recuperating from their injuries. No one was hurt in the other two incidents.

"After seeing what happened to those kids, we know if we can continue getting information from anyone who can help us clean out insurgents here and find weapons caches, we're making this a safer place down the line for the local nationals," said Marietta, Ga. native Staff Sgt. William Stone, a squad leader from Company E, 2nd Bn., 5th Cav. Regt.

As the troops from Co. E conducted a foot patrol they went from house to house,



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp 1-1 Cav. Public Affairs)

Sgt. Jose Martinez, a team leader for Co. E, 2nd Bn., 5th Cav. Regt., peers over vegetation in the courtyard of a house to look out for anything suspicious while pulling security March 26 near the village of Khan Dari, Iraq. asking about the IED strikes the day before, inquiring about the welfare of the people living there and collected information on terrorists and insurgent cells operating in the area.

On their first stop, an Iraqi family eagerly greeted the U.S. troops, offering them tea,

a sign that shows the difference between how the people in the villages feel about the insurgents compared with their feelings for U.S. troops, according to Miles City, Mont. native Sgt. 1st Class Anthony Pluhar, a platoon sergeant for Co. E, 2nd Bn., 5th Cav. Regt.

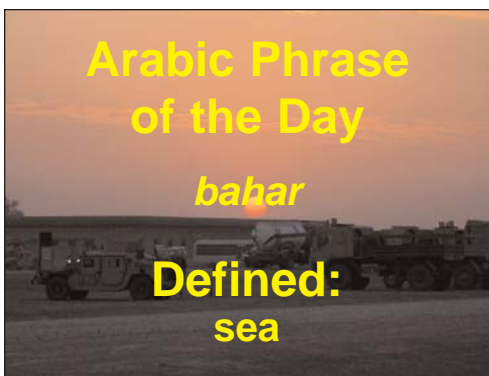
"To hurt children just goes to show that the bad guys don't care about the people living here," Pluhar said. "Apparently the insurgents don't have families or feelings like normal people, they're simply ruthless thugs."




At one house, Pluhar spoke to an Iraqi farmer, who told Pluhar he had not heard about the IED strike by the school but would be willing to give information if he did.

Although the mission did not yield much information on the three strikes, the Soldiers said that they have had a lot of cooperation from the people in getting information leading to the capture of insurgents on previous patrols, which is due, they say in large part to their building of trust with the Iraqis living in the villages in which they patrol.

Spc. Michael Evans, with Co. E, reflected on what the day's mission meant to him.

"It's a great feeling to know we're contributing to getting insurgents off the streets so the people don't have to live in fear from someone killing their children or hurting them," said Evans.



Iraq 3-Day Weather Report			
	Today	Tomorrow	Sunday
High: 81 Low: 52	High: 84 Low: 52	High: 82 Low: 57	

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Top Chaplains visit Camp Liberty

**Sgt. 1st Class Nicholas Conner
15th SB, Public Affairs**

Victory Base Complex, Iraq - The Army's Chief of Chaplains spoke with ministry teams representing units around the Multi-National Corps-Iraq area during a conference on Camp Liberty March 23.

Chaplain (Maj. Gen.) David Hicks used the opportunity to meet with chaplains from diverse denominational backgrounds and encourage them in their unique mission of ministry to the troops.

"Our job is to link arms and to minister to the Soldier," said Hicks.

The purpose of the visit was to assist and encourage the men and women who serve in the chaplaincy, said Chaplain (Col.) Phil Hill, Deputy Chief of Chaplains. Challenges faced by chaplains can be severe. Tasked with ensuring the

spiritual well-being of their Soldiers, chaplains can also find themselves as counselors, mediators and world religion experts. They may also serve as advisors to a commander.

Chaplain (Capt.) Mark Beren, a Catholic priest with the Nebraska National Guard stationed in Balad, Iraq, explained that he often felt he was the only priest in Iraq at times. The meeting gave chaplains an opportunity to stay connected to one another.

"It gives me a broader view of the chaplaincy," said Beren. "I'm often so focused on the Soldier in front of me, the mission of the battalion and on my duties that I fail to see the bigger picture."

Chaplains are a lot like fire extinguishers, Hill joked. You have to take them out periodically and re-charge them, or else they'll be useless when you need them.



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Nicholas Conner 15th SB, PAO)

Chaplain (Maj. Gen.) David Hicks, Chief of Chaplains, talks with fellow MNC-I chaplains during a visit to Victory Chapel March 23. He outlined his view of the chaplaincy and its importance to the Soldiers and commanders in Iraq. Coalition forces unit ministry teams, representing multiple denominations and faiths, gathered together for a day of fellowship and sharing.

Baghdad in Brief

Iraqi army assists after deadly car bomb explosion

FOB KALSU, Iraq - A vehicle-borne improvised explosive device exploded between a market area and a mosque killing five and wounding 20 south of Baghdad March 28.

2nd Battalion, 4th Brigade, 8th Iraqi Army Division soldiers reported that the bombing occurred in Al Imam city between a market and a mosque. The vehicle was a Toyota pick-up with an unknown number of munitions.

Iraqi Soldiers responded to the explosion and assisted in the evacuation of the wounded to the al-Hillah hospital.

One unexploded 82mm mortar round was found.

This incident is under further investigation by Iraqi authorities.

Iraqi security forces help wounded, secure car bomb attacks

BAGHDAD- Two car-bombs killed four Iraqi Police officers and one Iraqi civilian, and wounded an additional 16 in southwest Baghdad March 29.

Initial reports indicate that the policemen and Iraqi civilian died when the bomb detonated near a patrol at about 8 a.m. near the Jihad neighborhood. Iraqi Army soldiers and the police were investigating a suspicious vehicle when it detonated, killing five and wounding nine other Iraqi security force members.

At approximately 10:30 a.m., a second car-bomb detonated in Bayaa, wounding seven Iraqi civilians, including several children.

Iraqi security forces and Multi-National Division - Baghdad troops arrived on scene shortly following the attacks, established checkpoints and began to evacuate the wounded to local hospitals, while also searching for other possible car-bombs in the area.

The incident is under investigation.

Joint police force set their sights on common goals

Secure

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tant thing is that more of the local population is beginning to trust the IPs," said 1st Lt. Nathan Diaz, platoon leader for the Wolf Pack. "The people are happy to see the IPs going through their villages and towns patrolling the area as well as a large increase of information being given to the IPs to help combat the insurgents in the local areas."

"In the short time that we have been here, the human intelligence has grown dramatically," said Diaz. "We are getting more and more tips on events that could harm Iraqi security forces and coalition forces in the local neighborhoods."

The relationship between the police and the civilians is not the only one that matters. Soldiers of Wolf Pack worked daily with the IPs of the local area helping them to become more proficient in their job and building bonds



An Iraqi who lives near one of the Iraqi Police checkpoints shakes the hand of Staff Sgt. Johnny Colon, squad leader for 3rd Platoon, 127th MP Co. March 22 during his squad's visit with IPs.



(Photo by Sgt. Marcus Butler 4-25 Inf. Public Affairs)

Sp. Gerald Scott, a native of Buchanan, Mich. and gunner for 3rd Platoon, 127th Military Police Company sits in the turret of his humvee as his platoon visits a Iraqi Police check point March 22 south of Baghdad.

in the process.

These bonds formed will lead to lasting impressions for both the IPs and Soldiers as well.

"Moving from unit to unit, you have to start from scratch building trust with the people that you are working with. We have different personnel that work with the leadership of the IPs to help in specific area," said Sgt. 1st Class Michael King, platoon sergeant for the Wolf Pack.

"Whether that area involves investigations, accountability of weapons, or training; we have built a strong relationship with all of the stations that fall with in our AO," he said.

Progression of the IPs is sometimes compared to the police forces in United States but that is inequitable.

"One of the things when looking at progress of the IPs is you can not look at them as law enforcement in the United States for the simple fact the threat in Iraq is much greater," said King.

"That causes unique challenge for the IPs. I have noticed an increase in

professionalism as well as proactive efforts," he said.

These Soldiers will not only grow from the experience of working with IPs but also working with the Paratroopers of 1st Battalion, 501st PIR.

"It has been a very unique experience for me working with paratroopers for the first time. I have made life long bonds with many of them and I know that I can count on them no matter what," said Colon.

"The paratroopers of 1-501st PIR welcomed us in with open arms. Whenever we needed something to happen there was never any issues with getting it done," said King.

After the end of the tour, the Soldiers of Wolf Pack MPs and the IPs they worked with will be better for the experience.

"Our Soldiers will take with them a lasting positive impression on what they have learned during their time here and I know our IP counterparts will feel the same," said Diaz.

Are we becoming more stupid?

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq - I watched a movie recently that left me awoken to a reality of where our society could possibly be going. This movie made me change my perception of life in America and made me reevaluate my life. Although some will ridicule me for going back on a vote, this movie made want to change my vote for Jackass 2 from 5 golden spurs to 2 golden spurs.

The movie I watched was Mike Judge's Idiocracy. This movie wasn't the greatest film I've ever seen, but it was funny and made me think about things a little differently.

Idiocracy is a comedy/sci-fi about Army Pvt. Joe Bauers (Luke Wilson), a perfect example of the "average guy," who gets selected to test new hibernation military technology that will leave him frozen him for a year. After a mishap, Bauers is left in the device for 500 years. After wak-

DVD Hunt

Pfc. William Hatton



ing up from the long sleep, Bauers finds the world completely stupid. Instead of advancements in intelligence and culture, society has slowly become a majority of morons. After finding a world of idiots, Bauers discovers he is the smartest man in the world.

This movie had a few cheesy moments, but for the most part was pretty funny all the way through. There were also a lot of cliché moments as well, but I still felt like the movie stood alone for the most part.

The big thing about this movie was by

the end I had a sense of fear, a fear of becoming the society from the movie. I felt like going out and reading a book, taking more college classes or simply doing something worthwhile with my life.

Too many times in our lives we are "dumbed-down" by the stupid little things. Do we really need another little fat kid sitting inside playing video games? Do we need more advancements in computers that will allow simple-minded people the opportunity to press a single button to accomplish great tasks?

Idiocracy simply showed in a humorous way what life would be like if intelligent people stopped procreating and high school dropouts kept pushing out babies.

All and all, this movie was enjoyable. It was no Office Space, but it was funny. I give the film 4 golden spurs out of 5.



(Photo courtesy of 20th Century Fox)

In a still frame of the movie Idiocracy, Luke Wilson rides with the President of the United States of America in the year 2506.